

MRS Original 10 Meeting  
Guilford Co DSS  
January 13, 2006

Counties Present: Alamance, Bladen, Buncombe, Franklin, Guilford, Mecklenburg, Nash

State Staff: Jo Ann Lamm, Sara Mims, Tony Troop, Kate Johnson, Holly McNeill, Heather Thomas, Jeff Olson, Cindy Holman

Messages from the State

Jo Ann - talked about how far we have come. Acknowledged the struggles over the last four years and thanked the original 10 for stepping up and helping to speak about MRS to the other 90 counties and others throughout the years. Expressed her appreciation for all the work they have done. The Division will be putting a request to the General Assembly in the short session for a facilitator for all 100 counties.

Sara Shared that we have impressed our federal partners with how far beyond other states we are.

Tony Would like to continue to get this group together quarterly. Talked about recognition from state partners as well. Also mentioned that the 2007 Differential Response Conference will be coming to NC.

5104 Kate discussed the new 5104 effective February 1.

- When entering into the Central Registry if the date of initiation is prior to Feb 1, the system will not require entry into the new fields. If it is after that it will require those fields.
- There will be no 5104a this is because of the turnaround situation. The 5104 and 5104a would print on separate printers and then they would have to be collated. This seemed like a worse scenario than having to 2 5104s for each child. For subsequent children only fields 9-31 need to be completed.
- Until the responsible individuals list comes out in May there will be no turnaround forms because this list will change the programming. Until then counties will have to make their own copies of the 5104 and put them in the files.
- Data Warehouse on 2/1 they will not have all the new fields, but they will be adding them as soon as they can.

How are things going?

Specifically: # reports (up, down, or the same), in-home services caseloads, entries into Foster Care, repeat maltreatment, and barriers.

### Buncombe

- Reports are about the same
- In-home caseloads are increasing after an initial drop
- Entry into foster care recently increased, had been declining
- Have met federal benchmarks on repeat maltreatment, came up with a special unit to handle these
- Turnover major barrier
- Misc:
  - 210 and 215 supervisors meet and discuss cases,
  - have a 2<sup>nd</sup> shift from 12-8:30,
  - started with a special forensic unit, but found the need to spread them out.

### Bladen

- Reports are the same
- Caseloads are manageable, workers keep for the life of the case unless they go to Foster Care
- Prior to last year Foster Care entry was down, but it is back up.
- Past cases were being closed too soon and some of these people are coming back through.
- Misc:
  - Had a 2<sup>nd</sup> shift 3-11 but was a problem because people began dumping on them instead of flexing their schedules,
  - Workers have gone too far into family friendly and they won't ask questions that need to be asked or talk to kids alone when it may be necessary,
  - The whole agency went to Family Centered Practice Training and have Lunch & Learns each month to keep up the collaboration they developed there,
  - Have a box in the agency where co-workers or families can put info on a staff person who practices family centered practice.

### Franklin

- Dramatic increase in caseloads.
- Caseloads also increased. Not sure what to do when kinship care is in place don't want to file a petition. Sort of a blended caseload 90% their assigned ones, 10% covering others.
- Foster Care caseload steady. Increased entry but also increased adoption.
- Can't speak to repeat maltreatment.
- Keeping good workers is a problem.

## Mecklenburg

- Reports are up but this is not a MRS issue, it's a population issue.
- Caseloads are down. As a part of their geo-districting supervisors were cross-trained and this brought a fresh perspective to all cases which resulted in many of them being closed out.
- Foster Care entry has decreased but think there will be an increase soon because of a change in the process.
- Can't speak to maltreatment.
- Misc:
  - Also seeing the issues with social workers not holding families accountable they are taking ;family-friendly too far. Need training on how to be assertive and family friendly at the same time,
  - Have 3 full time facilitators and about 16 meetings a day
  - Retention Strategies hired a consultant company to stuffy their agency and bough Talent Keepers software package which has surveys etc.,
  - Developing community team social workers for pre and post services and working with grass roots community partners,
  - Specialized investigative teams a little backward from MRS but have 2 teams one for sex abuse and one for institutions (day care etc.)

## Nash

- Reports the same.
- Caseloads initially down, now back up.
- Foster Care entry the same.
- Zero percentage of repeat maltreatment on federal outcomes.
- Misc:
  - Struggle with retaining staff,
  - Have had good luck involving the schools
  - The Mental Health Situation is a real barrier

## Alamance

- Reports the same.
- All caseloads out of whack because of staffing situation in their county.
- Foster Care caseloads up, more infant abuse and also teens.
- Can't speak to repeat maltreatment.
- Misc:
  - Are having a lot of trouble with retaining staff, have tried several strategies (giving a pass on rotation, flexible hours), but they are so short staffed that they have had to abandon them, have stopped allowing interagency transfers because all the 210 workers wanted to move to 215.
  - Have a Case Review an interagency team that tries to offer family services to try to keep them out of CPS involvement. Referral can come from anywhere.

- Have invited commissioners and board members to meetings so that they have a better idea what social workers do.
- Lack of interpreters is also a barrier and often causes them to miss mandates.
- Lack of mental health services an issue.

#### Guilford

- Slightly fewer coming in, but they are accepting more that come in.
- Caseloads up some.
- Foster Care rolls stable, fewer coming in, but fewer leaving.
- Can t speak to repeat maltreatment.
- Misc:
  - Caseloads are manageable, they take folks off rotation when possible, are flexible with assigning cases so that individual workers do not get overloaded.

Ideas for next time:

How to handle stuck cases

How do you be assertive and hold family accountable, but also be family friendly?